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TAGS: PARM PREL PTER KNNP IR MU

SUBJECT: OMANI FOREIGN MINISTER SHARES VIEWS ON IRAN
NUCLEAR ISSUE

REF: A. STATE 72834

1B. STATE 72598

1C. STATE 68995

Classified By: Ambassador Gary A. Grappo for Reasons 1.4 (b, d)

11. (C) During a June 2 meeting with Omani Minister Responsible for Foreign Affairs, the Ambassador raised ref C concerns over a reported invitation by Iran to GCC states to inspect its Bushehr nuclear reactor. Bin Alawi responded that Iran had not issued a "formal invitation" to conduct such an inspection, but had extended a "general offer" to GCC members to examine "all of its nuclear facilities." The Omani government had "no intention" of taking Iran up on its offer, he said, as Oman had no nuclear expertise. More importantly, Bin Alawi commented that there was "no point" in sending anyone to Iran and asked rhetorically, "What would it achieve?" Bin Alawi also remarked that the GCC had decided to work with the IAEA, "and no one else," on developing nuclear power, and added that the GCC was currently working on proposed terms of reference with the IAEA on this subject.

12. (C) Echoing comments he made during his May meetings with the Secretary and Under Secretary Burns in Washington (refs A, B), bin Alawi stated that the question of Iran's suspension of its nuclear enrichment activities was "absolutely closed" according to his discussions with Iranian officials. He noted that he had been told it would be "very difficult" for Iran to stop and later re-start its centrifuges, and predicted that the P5 plus 1 one would "start finding difficulties" if they attempted to push forward new sanctions against Iran that directly affected the economic interests of other states. Such sanctions, he continued, would also "create a community of smuggling -- arms, drugs, everything!"

13. (C) Bin Alawi said that he "doubted with confidence" that economic sanctions would ever change the position of the Iranian government, and opined that harsher penalties could instead prod Tehran to accelerate its nuclear efforts. "It will push both sides to the cliff that much faster," he remarked. Bin Alawi further stated that the Iranian people were willing to make "major sacrifices" to continue nuclear activities as it had become a "matter of national pride and honor" for Iran. Given this context, bin Alawi strongly advised the U.S. and the European Union to end their insistence on enrichment suspension and to instead engage Iran on ways to prevent the diversion of technology towards a nuclear weapons program, which Tehran was willing to discuss.

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